

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) is conducting a State Environmental Study for 5400 South: Bangerter Highway to 4800 South, in the communities of Taylorsville and Kearns.

Prior to scoping, UDOT and the project team commissioned Dan Jones & Associates to conduct two focus groups to explore the attitudes toward and awareness of the 5400 South widening project. The groups were divided by gender and were comprised of residents living near the project area.

Information gathered from the focus groups provided the project team with a better understanding of the project area, attitudes and perceptions of the community as well as areas of community importance and connectivity. From the focus groups, the project team was able to identify the following themes in relation to 5400 South:

- Residents definitely see a need for improvements to deal with traffic flow and other roadway deficiencies including limited shoulder widths, poor sidewalk conditions, poor lighting and poor aesthetics.
- Residents have mixed feelings about UDOT and are uncertain that improvements will solve transportation issues in the area. Men perceive a greater regional east-west mobility problem and encourage widening all the way to Mountain View Corridor.
- Residents see property acquisition as unpleasant but necessary to widen the road. They feel it may be a welcomed opportunity for residents to get out of homes that are otherwise difficult to sell, however they also feel that UDOT should be understanding of the economic realities of the area and the circumstances of the individual homeowners, offering relocation assistance and sensitivity for the long-term residents.
- Residents welcome a personal approach to communication, suggesting fliers, door-to-door canvassing, public meetings and events. Residents feel that materials should also be available in Spanish.
- Residents also desire a get-in-and-get-out approach to construction and are willing to put up with inconveniences if the construction schedule is accelerated.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE SCOPING REPORT

Before action is taken on a proposed project, UDOT identifies issues related to the project that merit further study. This process is called scoping. The purpose of this scoping report is to summarize issues raised by the public that UDOT will consider during the environmental study. This report also explains how the public was notified of the opportunity to share their input during the scoping process.

1.2 WHAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY ENTAILS

An environmental study is a critical step in the decision process for a UDOT project. In addition to input received during scoping, UDOT evaluates:

- The purpose and need for a project.
- Various courses of action (“alternatives”) that would meet the purpose and need.
- How a project might impact its environment, meaning both the natural environment and the community.
- How impacts of a project would be mitigated.

The study also provides opportunities for the public to give their input to UDOT for consideration.

After a study is completed, a proposed action is approved and funding is in place, construction may begin. The Utah State Legislature funded this project in 2010.

1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The 5400 South: Bangerter Highway to 4800 West study was initiated after local government leaders recommended a transportation improvement for 5400 South. Although 5400 South improvements have been suggested for many years, local leaders most recently documented the intent to widen 5400 South in the Wasatch Front Regional Council’s (WFRC) draft 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Long-Range Plan recommends widening as a “Phase 1” project, meaning that it is prioritized to be completed before 2020.

In 2010, the Utah State Legislature passed Senate Bill 215, which provided funding for this project along with other priority transportation projects in Salt Lake County.

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- This report summarizes issues raised by the public for UDOT to consider before action is taken on 5400 South.
 - Local government leaders identify needs for transportation projects through long-range planning.
 - The Utah State Legislature approved funds for this project in 2010.
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